

AN
O R A T I O N,

PRONOUNCED

AT Bridgwater, OCTOBER 1, 1801,

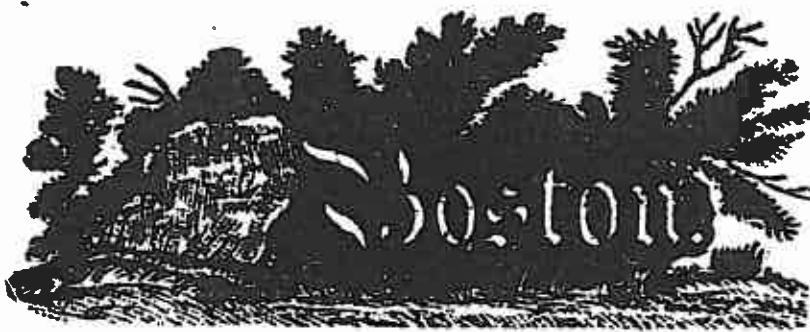
AT THE REQUEST OF THE

Columbian Society,

BY Hector DIT, A. M.

"Doxare inimicis res publica."

— — — — "All parties sling aside;
"Despise their nonsense, and together join."

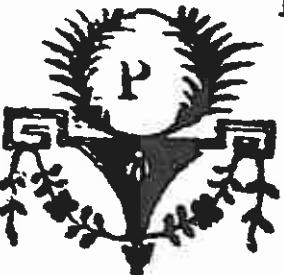


PRINTED
BY RUSSELL AND CUTLAW.
1801.

“ WHOEVER joins himself to a PARTY with any other intention than to moderate, as much as in him lies the heats which he shall find among them, and to calm their passions, and to take all opportunities of reducing *both sides*, as fast he can, to terms of UNION and CONCORD ; whoever does not object to his *own side* when they are in the WRONG, and strive to enforce whatever come from the *other* when they are in the RIGHT ; whoever continues in a PARTY with any other meaning, than to use his best endeavours to bring *both sides* to embrace the *true profit, honor, and safety* of the PUBLIC : If this be not his only *end and aim*, he is not an HONEST MAN, nor a GOOD PATRIOT.”——*Essays on Peace and War*, by CHARLES D'AVENANT, LL.D.



AN ORATION.



PHILOSOPHY invites us to its solitary retreat ;—there the turbulence of our passions is assuaged by the study of wisdom and truth; there our proud spirits and vain conceits are humbled by the august appearance of reason ; and there the imagination returns from its visionary pursuits with instructive precepts, and practical lessonsto improvethemind, and reformtheheart. The SCIENCES, which elucidate the ways and works of DEITY to man, present us an extensive field for the display of great and splendid abilities, where genius acquires immortal glory in the immensity of its career. Talents capable of investigating the phenomena of nature, and diving into the depths of erudition, may venture to soar in those regions, where inferior minds would become vertiginous by the sublime height. But, contented with applauding those, who have the magnanimity to achieve such distinguished labors, the capacity to attain so great perfection, and the happiness to receive the merit due to their preeminence, we turn our attention to the contemplation of the scene around us. If it should not convey rational information, it may happily possest the power of communicating a momentary gratification.

If America, favoured beyond all nations in the enjoyment of *peace, order, and liberty*, does not

furnish sufficient instances of the follies, persecutions, and calamities of PARTY SPIRIT, for further corroborating attestations, we appeal to the bleeding records of antiquity, and the histories of other climes. No theme, which is interesting to our country, however foreign it may be to the professed object of this Institution, can be unworthy of our present consideration. Every native American, who venerated our Constitution, whose bosom glows with the ardent love of liberty, and who is desirous of perpetuating the blessing,—whose exertions have been seconded by a spirit of perseverance in restoring the alienated affections of individuals to a love of their country, has lent the aid of his head and heart to render our Government dignified at home, and respected abroad. A subject of so great magnitude naturally involves in it a discussion of those *means*, which, threatening the subversion of our freedom, the security of our persons and property, the annihilation of all law and justice, ~~and~~ are calculated, eventually, to tyrannize over the people. Among those *causes*, which have been fatal to civil institutions, and more especially to Republican Governments, *party spirit* does not appear the most inconsiderable. But divested of our prejudices, and withdrawn from the influence of private considerations, we will trace its *origin* and *progress*, without enquiring into its effects upon individual characters, upon morality and religion.

FREQUENT public addresses render it occasionally necessary to deviate from common topics; and in digressing we seek more than variety; we are induced by a probability of exciting a few to *think*, and directing those thoughts to the public interest. The praise and gratitude of millions await him, who is so fortunate as to succeed.

HOWEVER difficult it may appear to conquer prejudices, discard attachments to particular tenets, and subdue the passions, in all political discussions, the good of society requires it. The excessive indulgence of these deep-rooted, obstinate, unbending prejudices, and irritable passions, first kindle the torch of civil discord, feuds, factions and rapine, while *ignorance*, which is never idle, fans the flame. It is the peculiar characteristic of folly to be constantly meddling, and too frequently intent on mischief.

A PERIOD, revolutionary like the present, and perhaps the most eventful ever witnessed in the affairs of men, demands an unusual portion of candour. Without an absolute renunciation of the noblest feelings of nature, it would be impossible for Nations, the most remote, not to be agitated by the convulsions in Europe. Divested of sensibility, and dozing in the indifference of stoicism, a few listless unaffected beings may be found, who remain unmoved spectators of the conflict of these contending powers, equally inflexible in the pursuit of conquest. The lethargy of their minds, surpassing the apathy of their souls, may have guarded every avenue to the heart, to the entire exclusion of all knowledge of the widely extended factions, which have revenged themselves upon the CONTINENT, when the outrages of their mad ambition, and the devastations occasioned by their lust of power, have in a manner subverted all social order.* But the *passions*, awakened by the distant echoes of their distress, participate in their struggles for liberty, even to a dereliction of the

* "The true light in which the French revolution ought to be contemplated, is that of a grand experiment on human nature. Political power, the most seducing object of ambition, never before circulated through so many hands; the prospect of possessing it was never before presented to so many minds." Rev. R. HAIL's *diss. mod. Infed.* BURKE's *Letter to the Duke of Portland*.—Also to a Member of the Nat. Assem.

duties they owe their country. No longer guided by reason, men cease to be calm and dispassionate. The most absurd and intoxicating partialities to foreign intrigue are embraced without a motive of interest, or the most distant prospect of honor. Under the influence of such prejudices, the control of such impressions, and the guidance of such passions, *patriotism* is extinguished, and the mind is prepared for insurrections and treason.

CIVILIANS and philosophers, have lamented the evils they could not correct. Their monitory lessons, in which were delineated the follies and disorders of their ancestors, were repelled by the tyranny of passion and prejudice. The judgment once biased, persists in its obstinacy until experience is put to its last trial. In vain you remonstrate—in vain you reason; in vain you exhaust all the powers of logick, and the persuasive eloquence of oratory. Truths, which could not be better attested had they borne the signet of consecrated authority, or been proclaimed by an Angel of Heaven, “pass by them as the idle wind which they respect not.”† Unaccustomed to make *concessions*, they will not yield to *conviction*. Having renounced their natural faculties, or seldom employed them in speculative reasoning, to them, abstraction and demonstration, are the jargon of unmeaning expression, and the parade of learning, by which the sons of science attempt to ascend the pinnacle of power, and in the chariot of state, to ride, Phæton like, over the heads of the people.—SUSPICION sounds the alarm, and the passions, disorderly wild, fly to its standard. Dark, mean and mysterious *insinuations*, magnifying frivolous incidents, discoloring every object, and misrepresenting every intention, are circulated as plenary evidence. Amid the gigantic strides of demora-

† SHAKESPEARE.

lizing principles, and the hasty operation of unprecedented measures, the appeal is no longer made to reason. The social affections are weakened, the mind inflamed, and the understanding loses its ascendancy over the other faculties of the soul. *Intrigue*, always bustling to dazzle the weak, eloquent to mislead the wavering, and terrible in the execution of its threats, strips off the hypocritic mask, and gives to ignorance and anarchy the reign. Party spirit, without dignity or moderation, belches its dogmas, declamations and invectives, and huzzas, riots and discord, do the honors of the triumph. Modern faction, with uncommon diligence and industry, has applied itself to the favourite work of expelling all men of genius, of learning, of wisdom, of disinterested patriotism and incorruptible integrity from every office of trust and confidence, where their sagacity, their moderation, their political experience and counsels, would be no less advantageous to the present, than to future generations. The defolating reign of faction, with the same barbarian ferocity, prays upon the architecture of the hands, and upon the ineffable labors of the mind.

DISAFFECTION to every form of Government, in a few, a turbulent and ambitious spirit in some, a love of novelty and innovation in others, and the ignorance of the majority, are the origin of party spirit. If the more discreet, virtuous, well informed, industrious part of the community are drawn into its vortex, it is from an ill-founded opinion of public good. While the seeming great, endowed with the dazzling, superficial properties of intellect, to deceive the credulous, unexperienced in the walks of dissimulation, to intimidate the irresolute, and to perplex the wavering, plunge into party feuds from disappointed expectations, or the more despicable motives of ambition. But

the want of education to make right deductions from principles, to employ the information which is within the reach of all, to render men capable of reasoning and choosing : In fine, it is that wretched pittance of knowledge inherited by the generality of men, which renders them subservient to the intrigues of the artful and designing, and hurries them into tumultuous excesses, from which it is difficult to recede.* No man, who has submitted his prejudices to reflection, and in judging rationally, decides dispassionately and impartially will enlist himself in a *party*, where he is continually exposed to the fallies of passion ;— where his felicity is perpetually disturbed by new animosities, new complaints, and new grievances ; and where all is fluctuating and capricious. The seducing demons of mischief, practised in all the blandishments of deception, must first stifle in his bosom that love of peace, order and harmony, which an atmosphere, purified by *true liberty*, never fails to confer. He must be either grossly *ignorant* of what is transacting in the world, or possessed of an unusual portion of *vanity*, to oppose principles and measures, not extraordinary for rigour, but ultimately calculated for the good and prosperity of society.

VANITY is the first associate of *ignorance*, and disdaining restraint and the privileges of custom, sanctioned by time and reason, contemns every thing discreet, temperate, and magnanimous. It renounces the amiable virtues, ridicules humility and modesty, and reprobates that excellency, which it cannot attain. Cursed with “ an itching palm” for titles and dignities, those monu-

* “ Sed revocare gradum—
Hoc opus, hic labor.”—*Virg. Aenid. lib. vi. v. 126.*

mental inscriptions,* which glut a pampered pride; ambitious of fame and preferment, it detests every thing, which thwarts its designs, and knows no wish but the applause and favour of the people, and an exaltation to power, where it shall meet the eyes of thousands.† If human nature be capable of sedate, disinterested malice, or a delight in the miseries of others, it must originate from a mistaken *self-love*, which maddens and infuriates the mind. A temper so unsocial, so misanthropic, so narrowed and corrupted, would delight even in the *death* of a competitor. In the fanatic enthusiasms of party spirit, which like a pestilential fever, agitates and confounds all who have not fallen victims to its fury; instances of such malignity are to be found. Even in the enlightened age of the Roman Republic, we have witnessed an ANTHONY exulting at the sight of CICERO's head, who had been killed by a Tribune, whom his eloquence had saved. Republican gratitude and punic faith, synonymous in *principles*, have become proverbial in *practice*.

To trace the *origin* and *progress* of party spirit, a recurrence to historical sketches is unnecessary. It has found in all nations a temporary asylum, where it has endeavoured to establish its disgraceful throne upon the consecrated altar of liberty, which it has followed and persecuted thro' every quarter of the globe. Its adherents are of all professions, and its influence is commensurate with civilization. Repassing the ocean it has caused the Universe to ring responsive echoes to its

* "I look upon dignities only as so many more syllables in an *Epitaph*, and from whence no subject for variety can be extracted; since he who is interred is beneath even the inscription, which we read upon his Tomb." *Gang. nelli's Letters.* Vol. 2, p. 129.

† ——"plausus, et amici dona Quiritis;
Gaudet, quod spectant oculi te mille loquentem."

Quin. Hor. Flac. Epis. vi, lib. 1.

voice, like the undulating vaults of the dungeons of the tyrant of Syracuse.* We ransack in vain the annals of the Ancient Republics, to find the pure spirit of liberty harmonizing the interests of individuals. From the first establishment of civil society there has existed a few restless beings, who think the great business of life is to *complain*;—whose vanity sickens at public prosperity, and who, in the fretful extravagance of their imaginations, propagate the most perfidious insinuations, and practice the most refined hypocrisy to diminish public confidence, to poison and contaminate the sources of social felicity, and to undermine the venerable institutions of Morality and Religion. In the most important discussions they behold objects through a magnifying perspective inverted, and to support the appearance of uniformity of character, become the warm and clamorous abettors of opposition. They profess a solicitude for the dignity and prosperity of their country, but make all possible exertions to defeat the means necessary to preserve the one, and increase the other. Uniformly consistent with the ebullitions of their gairish fancies, they disapprove all governmental measures, and to render themselves necessary to administration, by making work where there is none, are continually discovering new distempers in the body politic.† They vocifirize *peace*, while they sow the seeds of sedition; and are “perpetually sermonizing it with LIBERTY for their text, and actual oppression for their commentary.”‡ These boasting patriots, the pro-

* *Dionysius the Elder* had in his palace a prison constructed “with such art, that every thing which was uttered rebounded, and was heard distinctly in a closet, called the *L.*, which served as a receptacle for these accumulated sounds.” *M. Lingue's Accts. Esqre, part ii. n. 2.*

† “*Tanquam artifices improbi, opus querunt. Qui et agri aliquid esse in Republica volunt, ut ied ad eis curationem a nobis adhibeantur.*” *Appius Clarius.*

‡ Vid. a Speech of *William Pickering*, esq. in the House of Delegates of Maryland, Nov. 1792.

motors of modern faction, stoop to the level of the meanest intellect to gain proselytes, and for the honor of obtaining one disciple, will submit to the contemptible drudgery of deceiving him. There are in all nations weak and indecisive characters, who never reflect; honest, virtuous, and industrious citizens, the timidity of whose tempers subject them to impressions from others;—these are allure^d from the plain road of common sense, to espouse the interest of a demagogue, and to share the infamy of his disgrace.

It requires no extraordinary endowments to develop the mysteries of their designs: No uncommon penetration to see through the tissue of the veil, which is intended to conceal them, and no preternatural foresight to predict their pernicious consequences. A system of intrigue is too selfish to form a permanent confederacy to effect its vindictive schemes. There is commonly too much vanity in the *heart*, and too many deficiencies in the *head*, long to suppress their iniquitous machinations, and to reconcile the appearance of *virtue* with the stratagems of clandestine treachery. People whom fortune has denied the privilege of drinking at the Castalian fount, whose reflections seldom extend beyond their private concerns, and whose intercourse with the world is contracted to the confined limits of their neighborhood, are not favoured with leisure or opportunity of investigating political *principles*, or the constitutionality of political *measures*. The science of government is beyond the confines of ordinary research; and many important national topics are involved in such a combination of circumstances, that but few capacities are capable of comprehending, and consequently but few are qualified to judge of the merits of such political discussions. The commonalty, who are often depri-

ved of the necessary information for judging, must therefore continue to fluctuate between no opinion, and the crude and inane sentiments of their own, or adopt the second-hand opinion of others. And they are twice blessed, if they are not misled by their too easy credulity.

FACTION and cabals have arisen from ill founded opinions of public good,* and turning their invectives from principles and measures to men, parties become in the views of each other odious, contemptible and profane. A similar enthusiasm in the cause of virtue, pursued with rage and malice, has deluged kingdoms in the blood of murders and persecutions, while superstition gloated on the agonizing pangs of dissolving nature, and denied to the expiring martyr, the consolatory pleasures of brief but sincere orisons.

PARTY-SPRIT assumes its greatest malignity when public measures cease to be the object of controversy. The mind is imbibited, and the passions no longer restrained by reason, are provoked and irritated at trifles, and men reprobate, condemn, and hate each other for what of itself is not vicious; and applaud and admire the champions of their own *sect*, for the zeal and outrage with which they oppose and persecute their opponents. Faction having proceeded thus far in its wild, eccentric, unrestrained career, sports with the sacredness of character, and consigns to the misrepresentations of envy and spleen, spotless virtues, and conscious innocence. Colleagu ed with slander and malice, it blackens and clouds the lustre of the best qualities, eradicates every favourable prepossession, and blights the fairest

* Lord Shaftesbury's Essays on Wit and Humour, part III. sec. ii. vol. i. p. 112. Hume's Inquiry into the origin of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue. part II. sec. iv. page 207.

meed of all its honors. Every barrier sacred to innocence is broken down, and the sainted shade of persecuted merit, looks in vain for a peaceful requiem in the bosom of its devoted country.—The *patriot*, once endeared to his fellow citizens, by a series of meritorious services, by great and difficult achievements, and by the care and assiduity with which he watched, guarded and protected their liberty, and defended their property, is branded by the factious with infamy and contempt. A greater ornament of his country than this, who to all those illustrious qualities which enoble the hero, added the virtues of a christian, and shone the most resplendent orb in our political galaxy; alike distinguished in the Cabinet, the field, and the sequestered Shades of Mount-Vernon, whose memory is embalmed in the affections of the good and great, was vilified by the unhallowed voice of insurrection and treason.—Imperfections are the characteristic of human nature, but misrepresentations, calumny and slander are the poisonous fruits of a malicious heart. But the NAME OF WASHINGTON “ought to have put HATRED to the bl^yss, and made VENGEANCE drop her arms.”*

PARTY-SPRIT in the first effusions of its disgust, is only heard to whisper its complaints in some obscure corner, never illumined by the light of reason. Acquiring strength by the influx of numbers, it vents those early ill-founded opinions which have been fostered by passion and prejudice. Assuming a more brazen front, and stung with revenge, it grows impetuous, and bursts like the thunders of Heaven, upon a deluded, distracted nation. It seizes, in its struggle for *sovereignty*, with an Herculcan grasp, the venerable pillars of the Constitution, which are torn by the first effort

* *M. Lingard's Memoirs of the Bastile.*

of its power, from their base, and the whole fabric of civil society is crushed by their fall. The still small voice of reason and truth, once able to avert the calamity, is silenced in the general confusion.

COUNTRIES unacquainted with the blessings of civil liberty, where the name of freedom is proscribed, are exempted from the evils and disasters of party-spirit. However strange it may appear, the reason is so obvious, that it may be deemed a mispense of time to confirm it by logical conclusions. A people deprived of liberty, and consequently of power, are deprived of every thing, which excites ambition, or induces them to engage in competitions. They are degraded below the dignity of man, and growing torpid from inaction, become insensible to oppression. For *dissipatio* enervates and corrupts equally its adherents and its victims. Those unalienable rights, and indefeasible privileges, guaranteed by a free constitution of government, and derived from law, respecting which have arisen cruel and sanguinary contests, are unknown in those nations, rendered paralytic by the convulsions of despair, and the rigour of oppression. We need not travel far beyond the Mediterranean, to find a nation so debased, so servile, and so oppressed. The centre of the extensive territory of Asia, in the possession of the Turks by conquest, exhibits a scene more abject than we have attempted briefly to describe. A people, who tamely kiss the rod with which the hand of tyranny inflicts its stripes---who suffer every species of *oppression*, the ingenuity of despotism can invent. Who submit to all the indignities and miseries, a government so brutal and bigotted, so arbitrary and corrupt, can produce. A people, whose interest in the ad-

ministration never engaged their inquiries, in case of a vacancy, whether the VISIER or the REIS EF-FENDI were strangled, removed, or assassinated.— To complete the catalogue of despotic impositions, the climax of vassalage, they are a people whom the cruel, inexorable, mercenary hand of power, has deprived of the privilege of enjoying the *property*, which they have acquired. Yet in no nation is the number of malcontents less than in Turkey. There faction forms no party for the support of a *bashaw*, excites and encourages no riots for the repeal of an oppressive edict, and provokes no cabals for a more equal representation of the people. No complaints are heard against the cruelty of their oppressors, the inhumanity of their tyrants, or the infringement of their civil liberties. If there be any thing, which assumes the aspect of dissention, it exists not among the people, who hug their chains, and bow a submissive neck to the yoke. Intrigue, dissimulation, and venality, as if disdaining the humble walks of life, are confined to the court; and there the possession of dignities is so short lived and uncertain, that the competition among these petty princes is, who shall plunder, oppress, degrade, and impoverish the people the most. So great is the rapacity of those minions of the *Grand Seignior*, the satellites of arbitrary power, that the cultivator of the soil, is obliged to be accompanied by an armed friend to prevent them from robbing him of the *grain* which he is sowing. Notwithstanding the difficulties and dangers with which LIBERTY is intrenched, the factions and cabals which convulse, disjoint, and disarm free States, who, having breathed the pure air of freedom, would not prefer its agitations of party, to the greatest privilege of a Turk, the permission of wearing a long *beard*, or covering his head with a *turban*? A state of nature

where all of the same species are equal, free and independent, where their wants are few, and their appetites less, is preferable to a government, whose *tender mercies* are a passport to the grave, and more desirable than the wretched condition of slavery, where the miseries of life eternise the pains of death. We feel a virtuous indignation, mingled with horror and contempt, at a government so barbarous, and a people so debased.

REPUBLICAN governments hold out to their citizens the most happy temperament of power, the most engaging attributes of national justice, and the fond affiance of blending individual interest with the public good ; yet are more liable to be subverted by the commotions and petulance of party, than by any other cause. The ancient Republics rise in attestation, but their histories are two well known to be adduced on the present occasion. But were we to indulge ourselves for a few moments in a retrospect, however brief the inspection, we should find not a page of their annals unimportant to the present age, and many of the miseries they suffered from spirit of party would make a more durable impression, than the most energetic description of the atrocities of modern faction. Their *liberty* degenerated into licentiousness, *party-spirit* generated cabals, *patriotism* was stifled by discordant passions, and *Greece* after a short flight of years, in which she enjoyed all the boasted freedom of republicanism, was crushed by the weight of her domestic discords. If sensibility be not enervated by habitual slavery, what mind can contemplate the short period of her prosperity, and not catch a double portion of that patriotic ardour, which inspired every breast of her citizens ? What bosom is not animated by the enrapturing, inimitable eloquence of her ora-

tors, who caused the forum to reverberate with the high praises of liberty? Who has read the celebrated battles at Marathon, and at the straits of Thermophylc, and does not applaud Grecian valour kindled at the shrine of freedom? When her Republic was no more, who does not admire her greatness even in ruin? That enthusiasm of liberty, that republican spirit, and love of glory, which rendered her insensible to danger, and produced so many excellent patterns of heroism, of learning, and of eloquence, enabled her to preserve an honorable superiority over her proud conquerors.

DESCRIPTIONS of her prosperity, till the last point of recorded time, will obtain an attentive hearing, and awaken future patriots, to trace, with the eagerness of enquiry, her republican principles, and emulate her political virtues. But different are the emotions produced by a display of the progress of party-spirit, which had its full range during the administration of PERICLES. A recital of these affecting horrors, which appal all hearts, and agonize the finest fibres, is unnecessary. When people forget their *baser* to gratify their *revenge*, history bleeds at every page. The indulgence of ambition, treachery and arrogance, is a melancholy prelude to the accumulated sufferings occasioned by party asperity. All claims to compassion and tenderness are forgotten in the hectic of impetuous passions, when personal injuries stimulate to mutual revenge.

THE history of Corcyra remains a monument of the excesses and horrid barbarities, which a people are capable of perpetrating, when exasperated by party-spirit. The hero derived his stamp of merit from the number and magnitude of his

crimes ; and he was condemned and stigmatized as a coward, who possessed not the turpitude of committing murder, from principles of private revenge. The persecuted appealed in vain to the laws of his country for protection ; he asked it with all the humility of a suppliant, with all the earnestness of entreaty, ever attendant on distress ; he fled to the altar for refuge, but even there he found not a temporary asylum : *Law* was annihilated, *humanity* extinguished, and *religion* extirpated. Faction, in the heat and commotion of the times, had usurped all rights, engrossed all privileges, sanctioned all dignities, and new modeled and conferred all offices. The public was metamorphosed, and by the all-powerful fiat of enraged faction was declared to be a **PARTY**.—

“Party merit outweighed all regard to kindred, cancelled all friendships, extinguished all gratitude, covered all crimes, and sanctified all enormities.” Debts were discharged by murdering the unoffending creditor : Public incendiaries were inspired to perseverance, and fraud and treachery were colleagued with violence in all their impious and detestable purposes. All these excesses of more than brutal ferocity,* were justified by a pretended zeal for the people.† Anarchy invested with the insignia of authority, wield-

* “Neque his lupis mos, nec fuit leonibus

Unquam, nisi in dispat, feris.” *Hor. Epode vii. v. 11.*

† *Anarchy* in the accomplishment of its object has always commenced its intrigues among the lower class of the people. Those who have not had an opportunity of perusing the lives of the celebrated demagogues, who flourished during the Grecian and Roman Republics, may see a portraiture of their characters in the conduct of *A/llum*. It is not my present design however to enter into an historical analysis of the character of that abandoned villain.

Hif. Acc. David, vol. iii. lib. 4, c. viii comp. 2 Sam. xv.

Tacit. informs us, that *Otho* pretendedly adored the people, and gave them the fraternal embrace for the sake of empire. Similar was the character of *Cibele*. Both of these demagogues upon obtaining authority, became cruel and unprincipled tyrants.—*Rollin Ant. Hif. vii. iii. Pto. Max. l. viii. c. 9. Cic. de Orat. l. iii. n. 137. Ad Attic. l. vii. ep. 19.*

ing its blood-stained sceptre with a consciousness of power, summed up the crimes of all its victims in the laconic and comprehensive verdict that they were *foes to liberty, and enemies to the sovereignty of the people.* Senators were deposed or assassinated upon the infamous pretext of being an order distinct from the people. The hoary citizen, enfeebled by the frigidity of age, broken down by a series of public services, agonized by the distresses of his country, prolonged by mutual pique, prejudices and suspicions, and wearied with their reiterated insults, was butchered as an enemy to the people, at the first suggestion of a wish for peace or a reconciliation. They continued to chatter this unintelligible jargon, THE PEOPLE, when nothing more was implied than a horde of individuals associated without compact, or any legal form or capacity ; the mere anomalies of human nature, to whom vanity in a paroxysm of extravagance, had conferred that invidious title.— Humanity is shocked at a detail of such infamy, and turns disgusted from the contemplation of this picture, in which are sketched only the outlines of their wretchedness. They propagated every species of immorality, laid prostrate virtue and religion, obliterated every mild and amiable affection, destroyed public and private happiness, and exterminated all that was dear or estimable among rational beings. This short, but impulsive representation of the progress and views of party-spirit in Corcyra, has no parallel in history, except in the revolutionary excesses and political fanaticism of the regenerated republic, the self-styled GREAT NATION. They introduced a new political nomenclature, in which intrigue and knavery were the only criterion of abilities, and proofs of excellency. Licentiousness was dignified with the endearing appellation of liberty. Self-

ishness was public spirit ; the domination of avarice and ambition, the reign of government ; and disorder and anarchy, methodized and perpetuated, were the laudable effusions of public zeal.

CORCYRA stands not alone in the annals of ancient history, to be gazed upon as a monument of the mad and unprovoked enormities of party spirit. Rome experienced the blasts and fury of its tempests during the fierce and unnatural conflicts of her civil wars, which proved fatal to her liberty, and converted her once famous Republic, into a *Military Monarchy*. And such have been the dire effects of civil discord* in all nations where faction has sharpened its murderous weapons, and commenced hostilities against the government.

CIVIL society cannot exist without fixed, sacred and inviolable principles, which have power to control the appetites, and govern the passions of men. Personal and genuine freedom cannot be secured in free governments, without a general diffusion of knowledge, of virtue and morality. It is preposterous to talk of subordination, established order, peaceful rights, a durable and permanent government, or to look for *liberty*, that pure ardent affection, in a country where all moral obligations are denied, are ridiculed, or exploded. It is repugnant to the eternal order of nature, and the constitution of things, that men unrestrained by *reason*, by *morality*, or *religion*, should

“En quo discordia tives,

Perduxit miseros !”

Virg. Ecl. I. v. 72.

“At hercule homini plurima ex homine sunt malo.” Pliny, proem. lib. 7. During the turbulent spirit of Pompey's faction, which threatened the Roman Empire with ruin, Horace observes, that it was not against the enemies of the republic, nor to humble haughty Carthage, to subjugate the remote Britons, but with more than savage brutality, Rome might fall.

“Sua urba hæc periret dextera.”—Hor. Epo. vii.

be free and happy. The passions, which are perpetually at war with reason, forge their fetters; peace denies them her friendly visits, she flies their barren inhospitable plains, and seeks her wonted repose beneath a sky more serene and mild.

TRANSIENT must be the impressions of distress, if, in the short period of American Independence, the violent agitations produced by party-spirit are forgotten. The deep discerning ACTORS in that great political drama, whose virtuous undeviating adherence to *principles* was the cement of our UNION, and whose uniformly steady, energetic exertions achieved our *safety*, will pardon me, if I carry their imaginations back to contemplate the scene, previous to that memorable era.* It will furnish feelings and sensations peculiar to the magnitude of the object of their animadversions. Their rigid fibres, stiffened as they now are by age, relax, and a cold chilling fear seizes their palsied limbs, as they retrace the *dangers* they escaped, and the *difficulties* they encountered. In every chequered scene of these troubles, they witness the intemperate zeal of the *unrestrained partisans* of freedom. They trace in every commercial town in the provinces, the rude vestiges of the excesses of an enraged, turbulent, disorderly, vindictive populace.† They behold the timid herita-

* The author avails himself of the opportunity offered by a publication of this discourse to apologize to some of his friends, who, at the time it was pronounced, thought it was his design to censure the *principles* of the American Revolution. He is however persuaded, upon a candid and impartial perusal of the Oration, they will be convinced his observations extend no farther than to a disapprobation of those vicious unjustifiable *measures* pursued by a vain and giddy populace in the heat of party-spirit, which the jealousy of liberty had kindled.

† Burning the Stamp-act; attacking the houses of the Commissioners of Excise, breaking their windows, and destroying the Collector's books, &c. &c. *Vid. His. Amer. Revol.*

"Contigerat nostras infamia temporis aures :
Longa uora est, quantum noxie sit ubique reportum,
Enumerare." — *P. Ovid. Nas. met. lli. 1, s. 6. v. 49.*

ing politician denounced as a traitor, despoiled of his property, and left, in the anguish of his soul, to see his family insulted, his house in flames, and himself expatriated. No arm could moderate their violence, no force of reason could assuage their passions, or restrain the madness of their career. They were the irregularities of a people knowing that freedom was their birth-right, and acting under an impression of that *freedom* being restrained. It was the impulse of *jealousy*, which an enthusiastic love of *liberty* naturally inspires, awakened by the imaginary encroachments of usurped power.

INVENTION has exhausted all its resources, and reason has been fatigued with its voluminous labors in apologizing for their zeal. The cheek of the venerable sage is crimsoned with a blush, at the remembrance of the follies and weakness of his *uninformed companions*, whose only exertions in the important revolutionary undertaking, were the mere party jobb-work of taring, feathering, mobbing and liberty-poling. Party-spirit gorged itself to satiety, revenge took its full measure of plunder, and reason, when it appealed to arms, reaped a fruitful harvest of victory. The hand of restored peace healed the wound which was inflicted by the Declaration of Independence, and renewed the commercial intercourse of the two nations, after a full and unequivocal acknowledgment of our Independence, and an honorable profession of confidence in the faith and integrity of our government.

AMERICA did on that occasion, and has always continued to suffer, more from her vexatious apprehensions, than from the *actual oppression* of the government of England. The same party-spirit

which was then busied in projecting and patching up a reconciliation, in emblazoning the excellency of the British Constitution, and extolling the *virtues* of the King and his Ministers, has been as industrious since the revolution in exciting the prejudices of the people against *that nation*, and against all those who did not lend the aid of their exertions to effect her destruction. They have bustled thro' the political circle of changes from Tories to Shayites, and from Whiskey-boys to Jacobins. And had our national character partaken largely of the gay, frivolous, versatile manners of France, we might have long before this experienced all the confusion, persecutions, and calamity, which the violence of party rage has inflicted upon that deluded nation. The same farce which has been acted *there* with so much applause and success, has had its rehearsal and benefit-nights *here*. But those political tragi-comedians have neither enriched the *poor*, by their pretended munificence, enlightened the *ignorant*; to whom they promised the empire of reason, nor given to the dregs of the populace, whom nature seems to have destined to perpetual obscurity, the high confidence of honorable service.

AMERICA has fostered in her bosom hired assassins, who have been ready to imbrue their hands in her blood : Who have sought in all the avenues of corruption, means to accomplish their diabolical purposes ; and who have practised the most unprincipled and deceitful arts, and propagated the most false and destructive doctrines to corrupt and divide her citizens, and sacrifice the country to a foreign power. But notwithstanding, while a WASHINGTON and an ADAMS, guided with a firm and steady hand, the helm of State, through all the squalls which the breath of

faction had raised, with their setting sun, the horizon of American prosperity looked bright. But the dawn of the present administration "is overcast, the morning lowers," and we trace in vision, with all the impatience of uncertainty, the future fate of our Government. On the present occasion, we will suppress the voice of prophecy, indulging the pleasing conviction, that it is the peculiar privilege of our country, one of the excellencies of our inimitable Constitution, in all national concernments, to communicate our sentiments with freedom to the public, to sound the alarm when we foresee danger, and to caution our fellow citizens of their approaching fate. Inheriting this right, "the grand inquest of the nation will not forever be deluded." Grievances, which are publicly known and felt, will not long wait the slow, formal process of constitutional redress. When men of unquestionable probity, of pure, uncorrupted principles, and distinguished talents, are compelled to retire from office at the arbitrary nod of power, factious, designing, ambitious spirits will advance. The respectability of public employment will then sink with its possessors into contempt, and party-spirit will thrust itself between power and an injured people, whose just resentments are awakened, till by degrees, order, peace and harmony, are over-born, and licentiousness, anarchy and confusion universally prevail. But far be the omen from this country! May the day of distress be at a distance, and AMERICA continue to be a FREE, SOVEREIGN, AND INDEPENDENT NATION.

